COMIC SHOP NEWS
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BATMAN 698

Batman Scores a TD—Tony Daniel Stays on Board!

A few months ago, reports had *Judd Winick* returning to ***Batman*** after writer/artist *Tony Daniel* finished his Black Mask story arc. Now, however, it appears that Winick is busy with ***Justice League: Generation Lost,*** while Daniel has a home in Gotham City for as long as he'd like to stay around!

Fans have praised Daniel's depiction of the Dick Grayson Batman in the six-parter that began in ***Batman #692.*** The revelation of the Black Mask's identity in ***Batman #697*** is more than an ending, however: it's also a beginning for the next phase of Daniel's ***Batman*** run.

Daniel made his debut on ***Batman*** in October 2007, joining writer *Grant Morrison*. Since then, Daniel has not only established the look for characters like Damian Wayne and Dick Grayson/Batman, but he later assumed writing duties for the character during ***Battle for the Cowl,*** the three-issue event that established who would replace Bruce Wayne as Batman.

For Daniel, the secret to his successful run as ***Batman*** writer and artist is advance planning. "I *did* get a good head start – about two months—but I quickly ate all that time up outlining a few different scenarios for the six-part story," Daniel said. "I had a whole half-a-year to work with, and for me, I wanted to make sure I had enough interesting elements to keep the story moving forward. The easy solution would be to do something decompressed, but I wanted to do something that moved along quickly.

"After I figured out the beats of the story, I had a basic page-by-page breakdown of each issue to draw off of, with rough dialogue added in. After all the art was done for each issue, I would provide final scripting dialogue. It worked out fine in the end, though next time I won't eat away my cushion so I have more time to devote to the actual drawing of the book."

When did Daniel first come up with the idea for his Black Mask storyline? "Initially, with ***Battle for the Cowl,*** I thought of bringing in a new Black Mask. Editorial had an idea they wanted to work on pertaining to his identity and we discussed it. But being that ***Battle for the Cowl*** was only three issues, Black Mask's story would only be set up there. The thought was to carry it out after ***Battle for the Cowl,*** to be resolved in the main book. At this point, I wasn't even dreaming I'd write the actual ***Batman*** book. That was for someone else to wrap up. So when I got my chance to get on as writer, I knew that his story needed to be concluded."

With this story arc, Daniel returned to the concept of Batman as a detective, making it a pivotal party of the story—and at the same time, he wanted to present a "play-fair" mystery that the readers could also solve. "Certainly I was trying to go for that with ***Batman #696.*** At the end, when Dick begins to remember more, he pulls out a bullet that says to him 'a-ha!' And my intention was for the readers to say it with him, 'a-ha! I know who you are bastard!'"

Daniel feels that his writing has improved during his tenure on ***Batman.*** "It's like any art form where the more you do it, the better you get at it. You're constantly learning as an artist, whether it be in a writing capacity, an oil painter or a penciller. I've already learned some lessons from the 'Life After Death' experience that I'll carry into my next assignment."

Over the course of his run, Daniel has focused on Dick Grayson's development in his role as Batman. "We have Dick instead of Bruce, so that changes much of the dynamic of what I think is traditionally a Batman story. Batman works alone, where Dick goes to trusted allies for assistance. But one of my goals for this story was to have Dick start to figure it out—to identify with Bruce more clearly, perhaps understand his methods a bit better."

Daniel also sees himself developing as an artist during his ***Batman*** run. "For me, it's about getting better while maintaining a good speed. It's hard for me to gauge it until after a month or two goes by. And I'm never happy. Mainly it's because I know if I had more time to spend on the art, I would be much happier with it. Good art takes time. The best artists in the business also happen to not put out eleven or twelve issues a year. I want to look as good as the guy who puts twice or three times the amount of time into their work. I think it's an elusive goal, but that's what keeps me motivated to get better. Will that ever happen? I'll keep chasing that goal for now. Eventually I'll slow down to do something that really shows what I can do. Maybe in a few years."

Daniel has settled into his role as ***Batman's*** writer and artist. "I feel pretty comfortable because I'm working with many characters I already know a great deal about," Daniel said. "So my research is fun and a lot of times, just refreshing my memory of events that took place 10 years ago or longer. If I were to do ***Superman*** right now in the same capacity, I'd have to take some time to go back and read every important chapter of his existence. And hopefully I get that chance too some day. But the key to being comfortable is knowing your surroundings."

Considering Batman's pivotal role in the DCU and the importance placed on *Grant Morrison's* ***Batman and Robin*** and the upcoming ***Return of Bruce Wayne,*** does Daniel have to put a lot of effort into coordinating his ***Batman*** tales with the rest of the Bat-line? "Mainly that's done in editorial," Daniel said. "When I'm working on my story, the other writers are working on theirs too. Or have their own plans that are unfolding. The Batman office helps to

make sure no one trips over the other."

While Daniel intends to continue on ***Batman*** for quite a while, his run as writer/artist won't be continuous—for a good reason. "I'm going to be teaming up with Grant Morrison for a couple special issues as his artist," Daniel said, "then I'm returning as writer/artist for ***Batman*** after that." While he was initially slated to write the landmark ***Batman #700,*** "that changed as we figured out the upcoming schedule. When Grant requested we reunite for a couple issues—well, you don't say no to Grant!"

Now that Daniel has proven what a fine Batman Dick Grayson can be, does he regret the upcoming ***Return of Bruce Wayne*** and, presumably, the original Dark Knight's reclamation of the cape and cowl? "I think we succeeded in what we wanted to do with Dick," Daniel said. "We didn't want people hating this. We wanted his stories and development to leave people wanting more of him. So that's what I think happened. Though we all want Bruce back, Dick made his case for being able to stand his ground. I think whatever happens after this, Dick could very well be considered an A-list hero."

What does Daniel have in the works after the revelation of the Black Mask's identity? He describes ***Batman #s 698 & 699*** as "a two-parter that focuses Batman on a string of strange murders. The Riddler offers his assistance, but that only opens up more questions for Batman's case."

For this two-parter, Daniel is stepping back to "writer-only" status, with artist *Guillem March* supplying the visuals (because, as Daniel explained, "I needed a break to catch up and gear up for what's next"). Does he work differently when he knows that someone else will be illustrating his scripts? "I pretty much write the same way I write for myself—a basic panel-by-panel instruction with loose dialogue ideas. Guillem is translating it beautifully. In my mind, I think it will look one way, the way I would do it. But then when I see the pages, I see his take on it, and it's usually better than what I was imagining! So it's a great experience to collaborate that way."

Batman #697, the finale of the Black Mask storyline, is in comic shops right now. ***Batman #698,*** the kickoff of the two-parter focusing on the Riddler and the Falcone family, follows on April 14th. And of course, June brings the landmark ***Batman #700,*** an extra-length issue with an all-star creative roster.

by Vaneta Rogers (with Cliff Biggers)

COMIC SHOP NEWSARAMA

Produced by *Comic Shop News* in cooperation with *newsarama.com*

Hack/Slash Makes the Cut at Image

Long a mainstay at Devil's Due, *Tim Seeley's* ***Hack/Slash*** has made the jump to Image Comics, with first Image-published miniseries, ***Hack/Slash: My First Maniac,*** slated for late spring/early summer release.

"After working with Tim on ***Loaded Bible,*** we welcomed the chance to collaborate with him again," Image publisher *Eric Stephenson* said. "We are delighted that Tim decided to move ***Hack/Slash*** to Image!"

Built around the horror movie staple that has one female surviving all the mayhem and carnage, ***Hack/Slash*** reverses the roles: not only does Cassie Hack survive, but (with the assistance of the hulking figure known as

Vlad) she manages to become the hunter rather than the hunted, destroying the slashers who terrorize others.

Hack/Slash: My First Maniac explores Cassie's first case in a storyline designed to serve as a perfect jumping-on point for new readers. Sixteen-year-old Cassie Hack has just been forced to kill her mother, the undead murderer known as the Lunch Lady. Now faced with overwhelming guilt, she must decide if she can make a life with her foster parents or use her new-found slasher killing skills to save other screaming teenagers. But does the apple fall far from the tree?

"My little creator owned book is making the move to the biggest creator owned comic company!" Seeley said. "The move is sanctioned by Devil's Due Publishing, and *Josh Blaylock* has been helping me with the transition. June will see the release of the first issue of ***Hack/Slash: My First Maniac,*** which is set in Cassie's past and is the perfect tale for new readers as well as those who've been following the book for several years. And, best of all, my crack creative team of artist *Dan Leister*, colorist *Mark Englert*, editor *Jim Lowder*, and letterer *Crank!* are coming with me to Image-Land."

Look for the first issue of the four-part series in mid-June.

CSNsider

•Looks like there's an Image superteam in development to follow up on the excitement built by Image United. So far, Image has released only a few teaser images for their August-premiering ***Guardians of the Globe,*** but it appears that Invincible and Spawn are destined to be part of the group.

•The heirs of comics legend *Jack Kirby* have filed suit against Marvel in an effort to secure copyrights to such Marvel mainstays as Fantastic Four, X-Men Iron Man, Thor, Ant-Man, Hulk, Avengers, Nick Fury, and Spider-Man, (whose links to Kirby have always been a bit more hazy than the other characters listed above); as well as the return of Kirby artwork. This is an escalation of the action that began with copyright termination notices that the Kirby heirs filed last fall, and Marvel's subsequent lawsuit asking a judge to invalidate those termination notices. One intriguing portion of the lawsuit says that "with respect to Co-Owned Kirby Works, as of the respective Termination Dates, Defendants will jointly own the copyrights to such works for their renewal terms: both Plaintiffs and Defendants will have the non-exclusive right to exploit such jointly owned copyrights…" Which means that, if the suit is successful, we could see multiple publishers presenting the adventures of Marvel's (and Kirby's) most famous characters!

SPIDER-MAN

BY STAN LEE & LARRY LIEBER

IF STEALING THIS DINOSAUR SKULL DOESN'T BRING SPIDER-MAN OUT INTO THE OPEN-- NOTHING WILL!
THE WALL-CRAWLER COULDN'T MAKE IT TODAY...
STAN LEE
LARRY LIEBER
3-25

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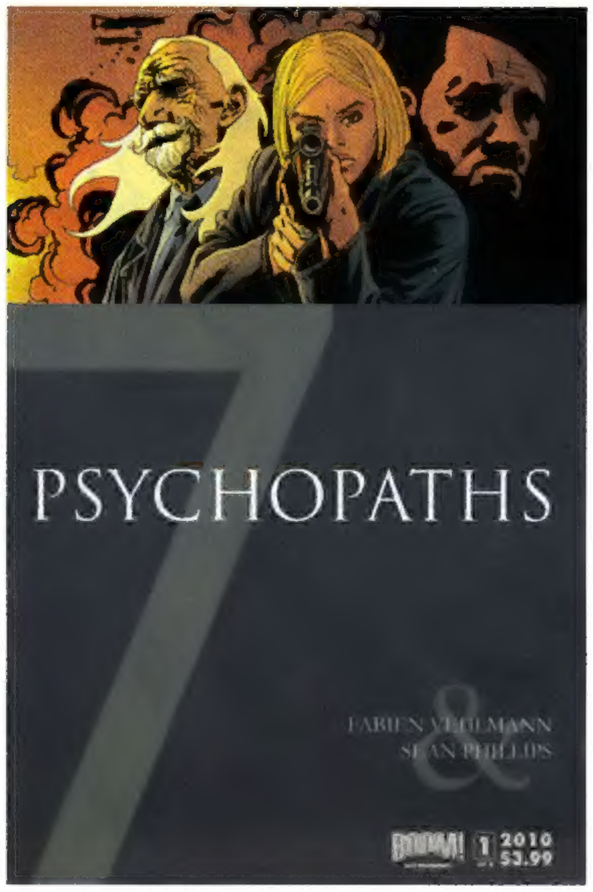
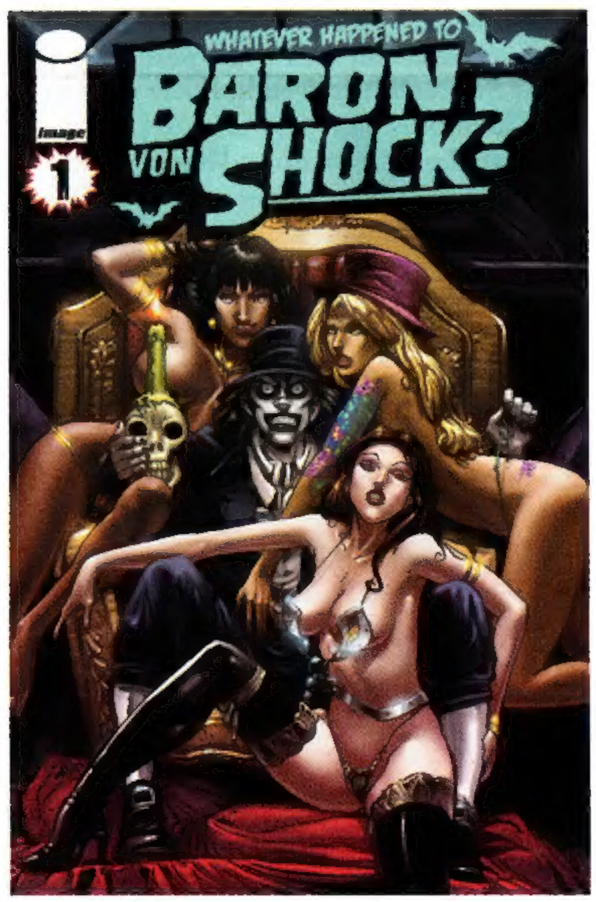


•***Criminal*** co-creator *Sean Phillips* goes to war this spring in the pages of Boom! Studios' ***7 Psychopaths.*** The fan-favorite artist joins with writer *Fabien Vehlmann* to present a WW2-era tale that follows seven psychopaths on their impossible mission to kill Hitler. "***7 Psychopaths*** is probably the most difficult story I've ever drawn," Phillips said. "Nine or ten panel pages, having to find reference for everything I had to draw, drawing a type of story I'd never tackled before—it was hard work!" Look for the first issue in May.



•*Rob Zombie* returns to comics this May with the debut of ***Whatever Happened to Baron Von Shock,*** an Image book that focuses on the rise and fall of a horror shock host. "This comic venture is very, very different in tone for me. Instead of a crazy over-the-top monster-fest like ***El Superbeasto,*** I wanted to create something that works more on a slice of life human level." Zombie said. "After ***El Superbeasto*** became a movie, I felt I had taken that style as far as I could. So, I really needed ***Baron Von Shock*** to be something fresh in writing and in art." Image publisher *Eric Stephenson* describes the book as "darkly humorous, thrilling and uncompromising—everything fans expect a Rob Zombie story to be."

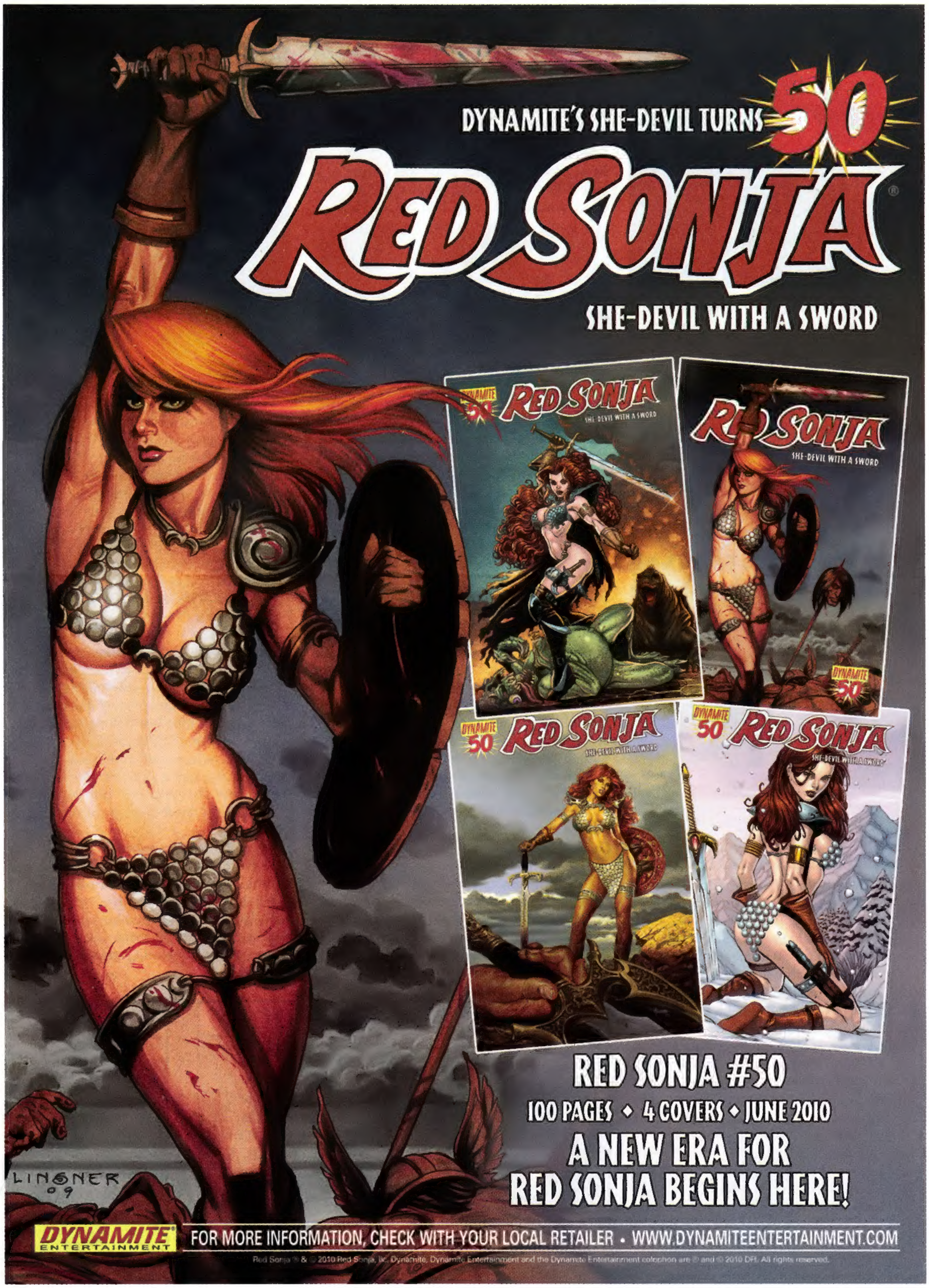
•Marvel has added a previously-unsolicited *Herb Trimpe* variant for ***Invincible Iron Man #25.*** Retailers will be limited to a maximum of three copies per store, so if you don't want to miss out on this variant featuring the work of one of Silver and Bronze Age Marvel's most prolific illustrators, talk to the folks at your friendly neighborhood comic shop ASAP!

•*Rodney Buchemi* will supply the art for ***X-Men Forever #21.***

•*Mike McKone* will supply the art for ***New Avengers # 64.***

•*Tan Eng Huat* has been tapped as illustrator of ***Deadpool #22.***

•Darkwing Duck is making his comic book miniseries debut this summer, courtesy of Boom! Studios. *Ian Brill & James Silvani* have been tapped to present the misadventures of the Masked Mallard in ***Darkwing Duck: The Duck Knight Returns.*** "It's such a dream to bring back ***Darkwing Duck***, a favorite of mine and millions of others," Brill said. "Everyone involved in this book are work-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ing tirelessly to make sure this comic has the same feel of anarchic fun of the TV series, while still presenting a whole new adventure in the life of Darkwing."

•When *The Luna Brothers* wrap up their long-running series ***The Sword*** this spring, they'll do it in grand fashion: ***The Sword #24*** is expanding to 40 pages for an extra-length finale. "Like ***Girls #24***, we absolutely needed more pages to tell the final issue of ***The Sword***," artist *Jonathan Luna* said. "We were trying to fit it all in twenty-two pages, but there's just so much to tell. We hope everyone enjoys more story!"

"This is the ending we've been keeping a secret and dying to reveal since this series' conception, so we cannot wait until readers get their hands on it," writer *Joshua Luna* added.

Coming Comics—Dark Horse in June

Dark Horse's line of retro-sculptures based on the early days of *Charles Schulz's* ***Peanuts*** continues with the ***60th Anniversary Classic Peanuts Statue #2: Snoopy.*** Limited to 950 numbered pieces, this syroco-style statue designed and sculpted by Yoe Studios is packaged in its own tin box, with a pin-back button and a character booklet. The statue captures the look of the famous beagle as depicted by Schulz way back in 1950—and that's a lot different from the character's contemporary look.

In ***Abe Sapien: The Abyssal Plain #1,*** *Mike Mignola, John Arcudi, Peter Snejbjerg,* and cover artist *Dave Johnson* follow Abe Sapien in one of his first BPRD operations as he leads a naval crew to a sunken Soviet U-boat to retrieve an ancient relic. What he uncovers is a paranormal crime scene, with a tanker full of dead men and secrets that should've remained buried in the deep.

One of the late *Dave Stevens'* best-known illustrations of *Bettie Page* is the inspiration for Dark Horse's ***Bettie Page: Girl of our Dreams by Dave Stevens Statue,*** which is sculpted by longtime *Dave Stevens* friend and collaborator *Kent Melton.*

Fans can drink in the wonder of Buffy and her crew with Dark Horse's new ***Buffy the Vampire Slayer Mugs,*** featuring images taken from ***Buffy Season 8*** cover art.

Eric Powell & Kyle Hotz join forces to present the solo adventure of ***Buzzard*** in a three-issue miniseries that begins in the aftermath of Buzzard's battle with the loathsome Zombie Priest in ***Goon Year*** as he wonders just what manner of creature he is. In a quest for answers, Buzzard leaves home, wandering into the shadowy spirit realm of the forest, where a dark path leads to a village living in fear of a bestial race of savages. As a bonus, each issue will feature a new Billy the Kid's Old Timey Oddities short story, reviving the first Powell-Hotz collaborative project in preparation for a new miniseries this fall.

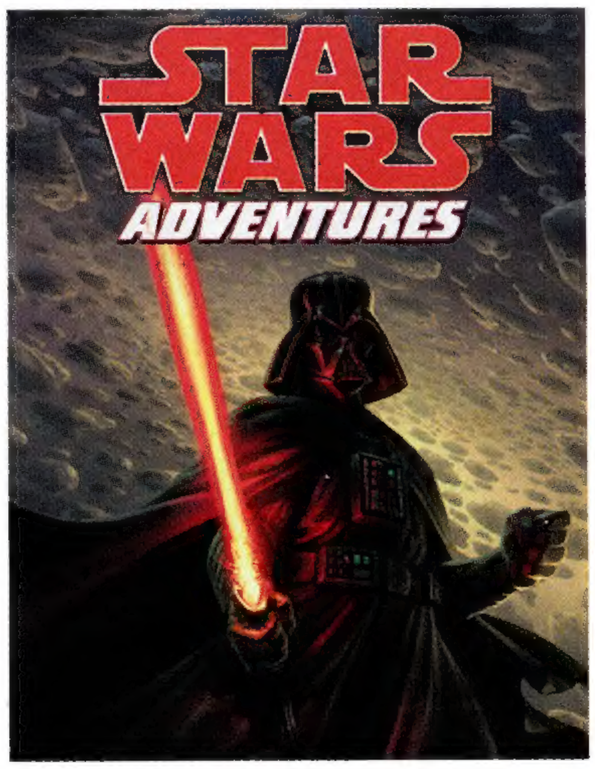
Carl Barks' art is the inspiration for the ***Classic Uncle Scrooge Statue Series 2 #2: Donald Duck "Square Egg."*** This syroco-style statue, limited to 950 pieces, is packaged in a full-color, litho-printed tin box, with a character booklet and a vintage-style pin-back button.

Dark Horse's original ***Creepy*** continues with ***Creepy #4,*** featuring new horror shorts by *Dan Braun, Craig Haffner, Dennis Calero, Eric Powell, Michael Wm. Kaluta, Bill Morrison, Angelo Torres,* and others.

Dexter Morgan, the Miami Metro Police Department blood-spatter analyst who's about as close to a real-world Punisher as fiction has ever seen, is featured in the ***Dexter Limited Edition Bust,*** a 7" sculpture that captures the likeness of Dexter actor *Michael C. Hall.* With Dexter in his signature henley-style shirt, in front he is examining a blood-spatter slide, but danger lurks hidden behind his back.

A team of Navy Seals find themselves the prey rather than the predators when they are transported toa new, deadly environment, stalked by a strange enemy. One by one these special-ops officers are killed by an unseen threat, until only one man remains. All alone in a strange world, he must do what he knows best—survive against all odds. Witness the confrontation in ***Predators,*** a four-part weekly series by *Mark Andreyko, David Lapham, Guilherme Balbi, & Gabriel Buzman* based on a *Robert Rodriguez* concept that serves as a prequel for the forthcoming ***Predators*** film.

Writer/actor *Patton Oswalt* brings back one of ***Firefly's*** most beloved characters in ***Serenity: Float Out,*** a oneshot illustrated by *Patric Reynolds.* Always ready with a brilliant aerial maneuver and a terrible one-liner, Wash was pilot of the Firefly-class ship ***Serenity*** in *Joss Whedon's* cult-classic TV series before being killed in the movie. ***Float Out*** includes three brand-new stories of Wash in a series of exciting smuggling raids, each providing a hair-raising escape or daring last-minute rescue! Even better, this issue features a cameo sure to please Serenity fans.



When the Rebellion's hit-and-run attacks on Imperial cargo ships become too audacious to be ignored, Darth Vader is sent in to find the Rebel base and destroy it. But to reach his target, Vader will have to team up with a recently captured smuggler named Zika—and dealing with an unwilling, wise-cracking partner may be more of a trial for the Dark Lord than the actual mission! Witness the mismatch in ***Star Wars Adventures: The Will of Darth Vader,*** a digest-sized OGN by *Tom Taylor, Brian Koschak, & Dan Parsons.*

Janet Evanovich, Alex Evanovich, Joelle Jones, Benjamin Dewey, & Andy Owens present a new adventure of Evanovich's Alex Barnaby and Sam Hooker in ***Troublemaker Book One HC,*** an original graphic novel that marks the comics debut of the best-selling author and her auto mechanic and racecar driver duo.

Dark Horse collected editions include:

•***Cages,*** a rescanned and remastered softcover edition of *Dave McKean's* offbeat and provocative series following the intersecting lives of a painter, a writer, and a musician living in the same apartment building, offering a profound rumination on art, God, cats, and the cages we build for ourselves.

•***Eerie Archives Volume 5 HC,*** collecting five more issues of the Warren horror magazine that features work by *Archie Goodwin, Frank Frazetta, Ken Kelly, Reed Crandall, Steve Ditko,* and others.

•***Flash Gordon Comic Book Archives Volume One HC,*** a 312-page volume that collects seven ***Flash Gordon*** comics originally published between 1947 and 1953, featuring work by *Paul Norris, Jack Lehti, Frank Thorne,* and others.

•***Groo: The Hogs of Horder,*** a trade paperback compilation of the *Mark Evanier-Sergio Aragones* miniseries.

•***The Harvey Comics Treasury Volume 2 TP,*** collecting 200 pages of full-color all-ages gems starring Hot Stuff, Stumbo, and others.

•***King Conan Volume 1 TP,*** collecting the first five issues of the 1980s Marvel series featuring work by *Roy Thomas, John Buscema, & Ernie Chan.*

•***Little Lulu Volume 24: The Space Dolly & Other Stories TP,*** collecting ***Little Lulu #s 118-123*** in full color.

•***Mighty Samson Archives Volume One HC,*** collecting the first seven issues of the Silver Age post-apocalyptic series by *Otto Binder, Frank Thorne, & Jack Sparling.*

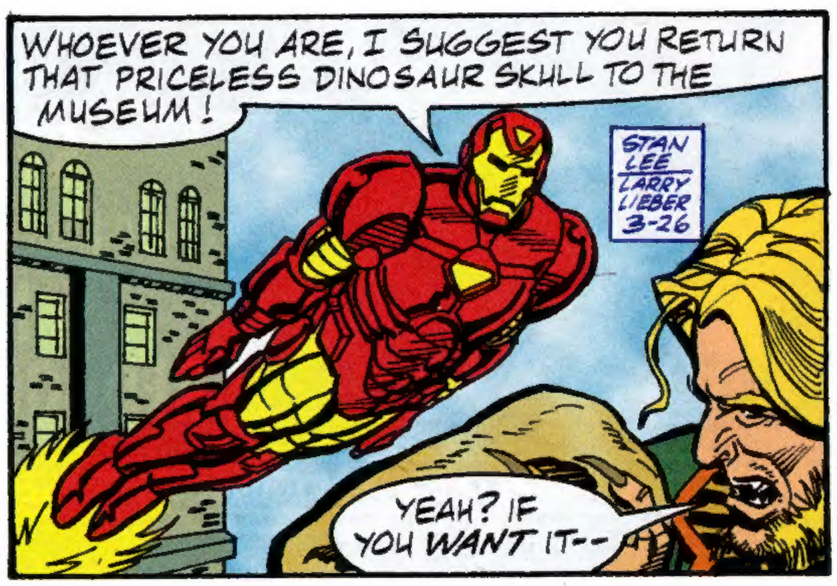
•***Neon Genesis Evangelion: Campus Apocalypse Volume 1 TP,*** collecting materialoriginally presented in the shojo magazine ***Monthly Asuka.***

•***Usagi Yojimbo Volume 8: Shades of Death 2nd Edition TP; Usagi Yojimbo Volume 9: Daisho 2nd Edition TP;*** and •***Usagi Yojimbo Volume 10: The Bring of Life and Death 2nd Edition TP,*** all featuring completely remastered art and new story notes.

•***Zero Killer,*** collecting the six-part series by *Arvid Nelson & Matt Camp.*

Back to Press

•***Ultimate Comics New Ultimates #1 2nd Printing*** (FEB108009), featuring a variant cover by *Frank Cho,* in stores in mid-April.


WHOEVER YOU ARE, I SUGGEST YOU RETURN THAT PRICELESS DINOSAUR SKULL TO THE MUSEUM!
STAN LEE LARRY LIEBER 3-26
YEAH? IF YOU WANT IT--

GO GET IT!
CAN'T LET IT HIT THE GROUND--!
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THE RED K AWARDS THE READERS REPLY

Back in December, we presented the 19th annual edition of our Red K Awards, a blending of commendations and criticism that points out some of the best and worst of the past year. At the end of that feature, we encouraged you, our readers, to send us your own Red K Awards for the best and worst of 2009—and that's just what you did! So let's take a look at what you had to say!

The "Eight Rings to Rule Them All" Award

DC's Lantern Ring Promotion

"Kudos to DC for the marketing idea of the decade! These high quality rings were so well made that they looked as good as the metal rings they offered later on, but I was able to get all the rings for free just because I bought the books that they tied into. And it was a real bargain, because the books were great, too!"
—Barry Kerce

The "Write Stuff" Award

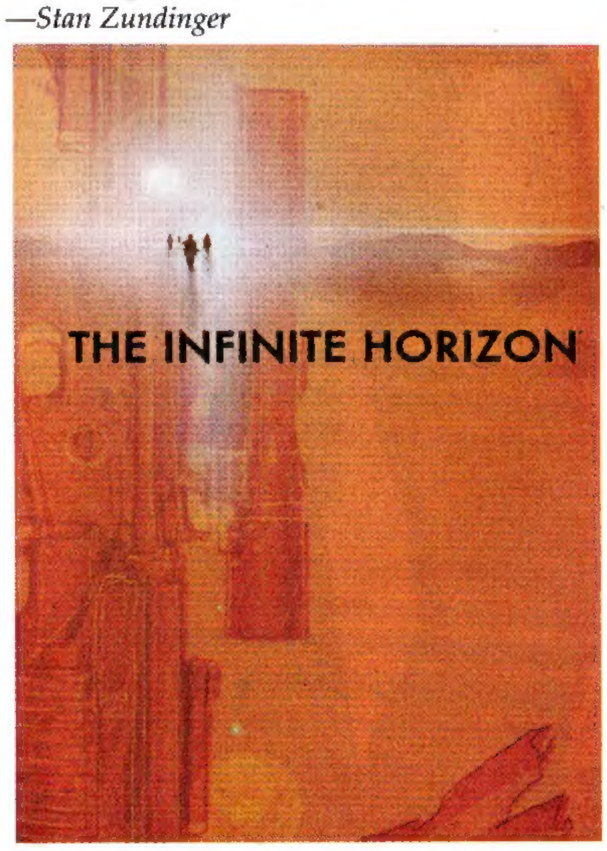
The Unwritten

"Now *this* is the sort of book a think of when I hear "Vertigo." Great fantasy storylines, superb characters, complex story structure, literary allusions, metafictional storytelling... It doesn't get any better!"
—Ashley Mull

The "Too Much of a Good Thing" Award

Ultra-Limited Variant Covers

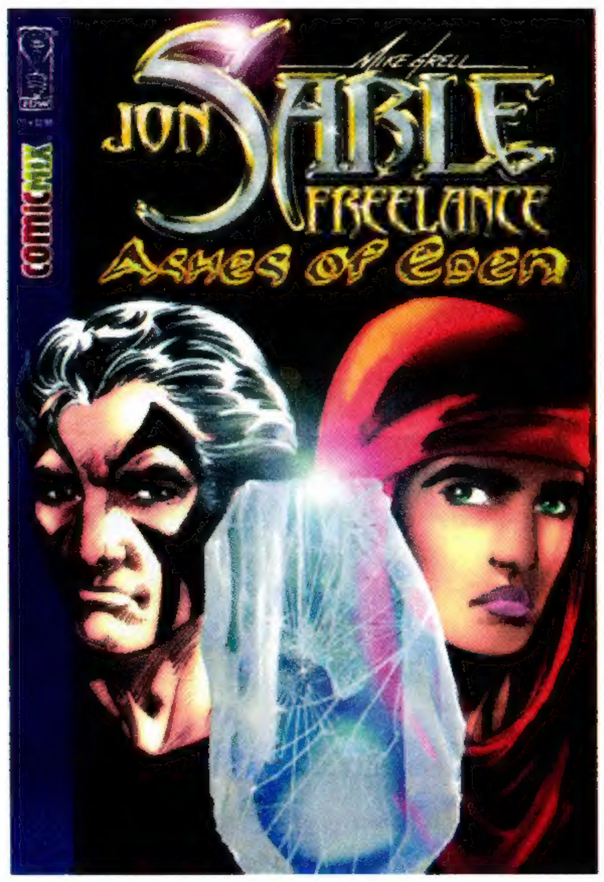
"I like variant covers, and I've bought a few 1-in10 and 1-in-25 covers, but when publishers start offering 1-in-100, 1-in-200, and 1-in-300 covers, that's just too much! Unless you're Donald Trump, you probably can't afford the high prices that go with these comics—and all that money's just for a different piece of cover art!"
—Stan Zundinger



The "Homer and a Foul" Award

The Infinite Horizon

"Duggan and Noto's six-part series dropped off the face of the earth in the spring of 2009 after four issues. This story, set in Iraq and the good ol' USA and based loosely on Homer's ***The Odyssey,*** hummed along for four issues, was nominated for an Eisner, and then, like Ulysses, seems to be lost to us forever. It didn't take this long to finish the real ***Odyssey***!..."
—Martin Harnick



The "Coming in First" Award

Grimjack: The Manx Cat
Jon Sable: Ashes of Eden

"Thanks to IDW for once again reviving these two great series, with the original creators! For longtime readers, it's a great reminder of the old First Comics days!"
—Tony Bowers

The "Great Comic Covert to Covert" Award

Secret Warriors

"A terrific showcase for Nick Fury going back to basics as the hard-ass commander doing whatever it takes to win. Revealing that HYDRA was controlling SHIELD for years was stunning—but even better is seeing how Fury handles taking on HYDRA and Norman Osborn with terrific planning and never-say-die attitude. My one gripe? Too much Warriors, not enough Fury."
—Michael Weyer

The "It Dozen Seem Right" Award

The Twelve

"*The Twelve* was a sign that Marvel could put out a Golden Age-inspired story that rivaled any of DC's finest efforts, yet they left it unfinished. Can't they figure out a way to complete this miniseries with the original creative team before fans lose interest in it?"
—Vincent Bellizia

"If Marvel isn't going to deliver the final issues of this series, then they should offer to buy back the early issues from fans like me who invested in it thinking we would get a whole story."
—Russ Lehman

HERE'S YOUR DINOSAUR HEAD BACK.
THANK HEAVEN ONE OF OUR BENEFACTORS, TONY STARK, ASKED YOU TO PROVIDE SECURITY FOR TODAY'S CEREMONY.
STAN LEE
LARRY LIEBER
3-27

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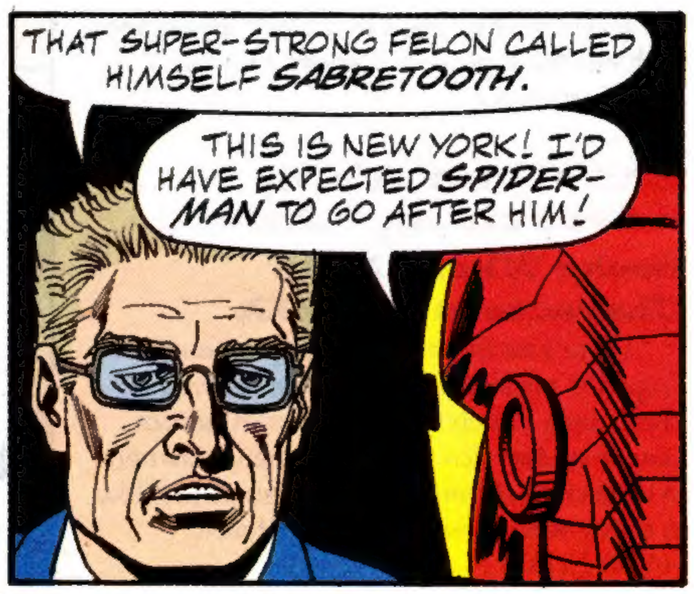


The "As the Planet Turns" Award

Planetary #27

"Talk about surprises—I had thought that *Planetary #26* was the last issue!"
—*Ryan Gammon*

"It was nice to see this one..."
—*David Gearing*

"Why is it that some (Bendis, Johns, Tomasi) deliver multiple books every month, while others are too busy being a famous writer to actually *write*?.."
—*Norm Stehrle*

The "Aliens Resurrection"Award

Dark Horse's Aliens and Predator relaunch

"Kudos to Dark Horse for finally bringing back their ***Aliens, Predator,*** and ***Aliens Vs. Predator*** titles after an almost-ten-year hiatus that followed their disastrous ***Xenogenesis*** series—an idea so poorly executed that it nearly killed all three ttiles. An idea so bad that it made no sense. An idea so bad that two of the main characters tried to get it on during a firefight with aliens. Let's hope they've learned from their past mistakes!"
—*Marc Cawiezel*

The "Shocking Statement" Award

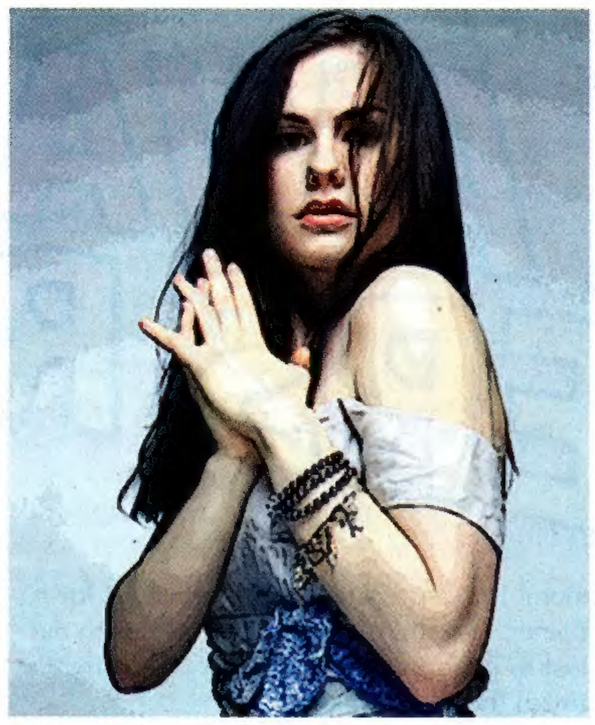
Best line of 2009

"Has to go to Volt in *Mark Waid's* ***Irredeemable #5:*** 'Yes, I'm a black urban hero with electrical powers. I know, I know...'"
—*Michael Weyer*

The "Untruth in Advertising" Award

Books Whose Main Characters Are MIA

"There's no Superman in ***Superman.*** Steve Rogers is missing from ***Captain America.*** There are a bunch of pretenders in ***Justice League of America.*** Bruce Wayne is nowhere to be seen in ***Batman.*** Do publishers just like to screw with their readers or what?..."
—*Matt Henske*



The "Fangs for Nothing" Award

True Blood Comics

"You'd think that, with the success of *Charlaine Harris's* books—let alone the HBO series—someone would publish a Sookie Stackhouse comic series! There is an eager audience just waiting to snap this one up!"
—*Tony Bowers*

The "Return of the King" Award

House of Mystery #13 (with interior art by Neal Adams)

"A new *Neal Adams* story! I never thought I'd witness such a wonder! Now I'm ready for that long-rumored *Neal Adams* Batman graphic novel to hit!"
—*Larry Reiner*

The "Baby's Got Back" Award

DC's Backup Features in $3.99 Comics

"Marvel charges me $3.99 and doesn't give me anything extra for it. DC charges $3.99, but they give me an extra backup feature that keeps my cost per story page at about the same price as a $2.99 comic. Guess where my money is going?..."
—*Stewart L. King*

"Fans got a mixed bag with DC's 'co-feature' plan: another hero, but at the cost of another dollar. Some books were tried only for the 'backup' (sorry, DC, but that's what they are)... If the pagecount were kept at 22 (15 lead pages, 7 backup) and the cost remained at $2.99, it'd be a win-win for budget-conscious fans... and where's the Huntress backup in ***Power Girl***?'
—*Vinny Bellizia*

The "Let's Kill the Goose That Lays the Golden Eggs" Award

Publisher Greed

"They just don't get it. First, they destroy the numbering of comics to try increase the value of new books. Then they create variant covers in an effort to manipulate the comics market. And the final straw, the inevitable slide towards $3.99 comics. They're going to destroy our hobby!"
—*Fiski Hughes*

The "Critical Mass" Award

Red Mass for Mars #4

"I have never seen a title take so long to complete! I've tried contacting Image but have never received one reply from them or from *Jon Hickman* regarding the delay..."
—*Mike Hanley*

The "Carrying a Torch" Award

Torchwood

"Come on, give us a comic featuring Captain Jack and the rest of the Torchwood crew! How can all the comic publishers have dropped the ball on this?"
—*Sarah Adamski*

The "Faust But Not Last" Award

Faust #13

Over twenty years after the first issue of *David Quinn & Tim Vigil's* ***Faust: love of the Damned*** hit comic shops and blew people away with its detailed artwork and explicit imagery, readers are *still* waiting for the 13th and final issue of the series. Come on, guys, get it done already! What's a reader got to do to get closure on this story—sell his soul to the devil?"
—*Marc Cawiezel*

The "Vanishing Act" Award

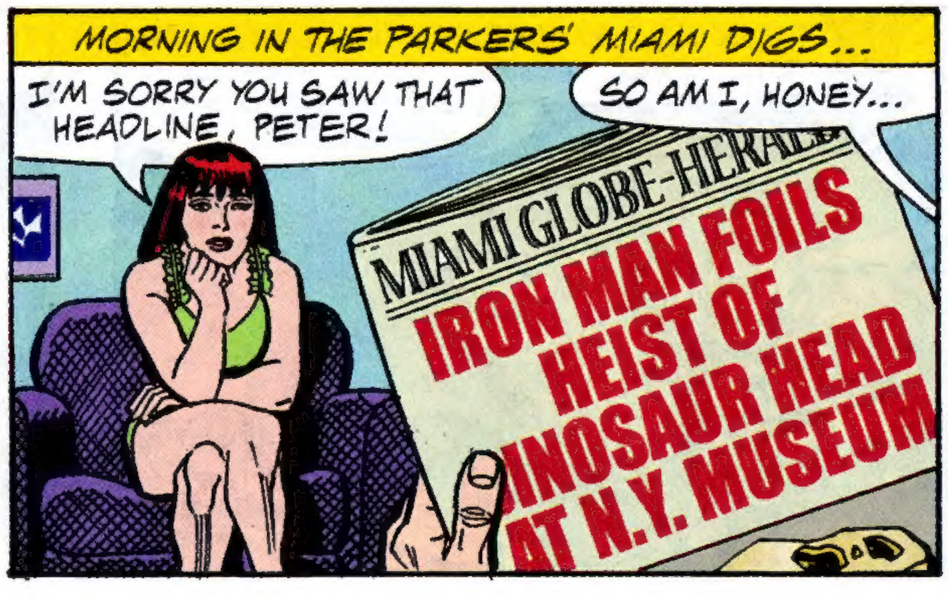
Wizard Magazine

"Slowly and steadily through 2009, the pagecount continues to drop until it finally hit its low point of 68 pages from cover to cover. Hey, ***Wizard,*** if you're going to drop your pagecount by more than half, maybe you should try dropping the price, too! Stop worrying about putting three different covers on an issue and try improving what's inside those covers!"
—*Shane Berketa*

The "Reeve-ealing Likeness" Award

Superman: Secret Origin

"I was surprised to see *Gary Frank* casting *Christopher Reeve* as Clark Kent/Superman in the ***Secret Origin*** series. Oh, sure, Reeve was the perfect film Superman, but I hadn't heard anything about DC using his likeness..."
—*Rae Cambron*


MORNING IN THE PARKERS' MIAMI DIGS...
I'M SORRY YOU SAW THAT HEADLINE, PETER!
SO AM I, HONEY...
MIAMI GLOBE-HERALD
IRON MAN FOILS HEIST OF DINOSAUR HEAD AT N.Y. MUSEUM

IF THERE'S A NEW CRIME WAVE, I MAY BE NEEDED!
BUT--SABRETOOTH MAY BE WAITING!
STAN LEE
LARRY LIEBER
3-29
MIAMI GLOBE-HERALD
MARLINS READY
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The "Un-Endangered Species" Award

Sonic the Hedgehog

"People make a big thing out of a comic reaching a hundredth issue, but ***Sonic the Hedgehog*** has been plugging along month after month for over two hundred issues now. Superhero fans may not give the book much attention, but tens of thousands of readers realize that ***Sonic*** is one of the most reliably entertaining books being published."
—*Julie Levine*

The "Blogomic Book" Award

Glamourpuss

"I've been reading this book since the first issue, and I'm still not really sure what *Dave Sim* is trying to do with it... but I know that I'm enjoying the heck out of his commentary on comic strip art and his recreation of same! As far as I'm concerned, he can throw away all that fashion satire and just turn it into a "blog-comic" on comic strip art!..."
—*Charlie Dettmann*

The "Flimsy Excuse" Award

Dark Horse

"Starting last year, several Dark Horse books started using what seems to be the same paper for their covers as they use for their inside pages. The books feel flimsy and are almost impossible to keep in great shape as a result. Go back to the good paper, Dark Horse!"
—*Robin Hoffman*

The "Congo Can Go" Award

Congorilla in Justice League of America

"When is someone going to tell *James Robinson* that no one but him likes Congorilla? Quit wasting space with this deservedly forgotten 1950s backup feature and put a real A-lister in his place in the JLA!"
—*Eric DeLucca*

The "What's In a Name?" Award

Celebrity Comics

"I'm tired of actors and other celebrities attaching their names to a comic book that they didn't have much to do with. Does anyone really believe that *Tyrese Gibson* had anything to do with ***Mayhem*** other than lending his name to it and maybe throwing out a line or two for the concept (as if this book had much of a concept to begin with)? Does anyone think that *Milo Ventimiglia* is really involved in producing ***Berserker***? Or that *Jennifer Love Hewitt* devoted more than five minutes of her life to ***Jennifer Love Hewitt's Music Box***? If they didn't write the book, then don't put their name on it!"
—*Lindsey Hollis*

The "FrankenFailure" Award

The Punisher

"What they've done to Frank Castle is a travesty. Hard to believe that a character with such brutal real-world beginnings could be turned into a grade-B horror film joke..."
—*Chris Gould*

The "Kiss Off" Award

Nick Simmons' Incarnate

"It must be awfully easy to produce a comic book when you can ride on your father's celebrity as a member of Kiss... Doesn't take too much talent to turn out a comic when you're not doing much more than copying someone else's art and rearranging the panels to fit your story, though..."
—*Gary Duggar*

The "All Star" Award

Grant Morrison's *Batman and Robin*

"Talk about a real all star comic! *Grant Morrison's* working with a new Batman (Dick Grayson) and a new Robin (Damian), but he's turning out a book that is as quintessentially Batman and Robin as any comic that's ever been done. After Morrison did his magical thing with ***All Star Superman***, I thought I had seen the best work of his career, but this series outdoes even that!"
—*Robert Gonzalez*

The "Command-D for Deluxe" Award

Kamandi

"DC started reprinting *Jack Kirby's* underappreciated ***Kamandi*** in Archive editions before they switched over to the deluxe hardcover format for the rest of the Kirby comics material. Now they need to redo the Kirby Kamandi run--including the unreprinted ones--in deluxe hardcovers so that my Kirby editions will match!"
—*Amit Patel*

The "MIA" Award

Barry Windsor-Smith

"How disappointing it is that the most talented comics artist alive today isn't producing any new comics..."
—*Kev Pereira*

"***Casino Royale*** and ***Quantum of Solace*** made James Bond hot once again, so why hasn't someone started a James Bond comic book to take advantage of the spy's new popularity?"
—*Sara Bertram*

"Doc Savage is coming back, but where is the Shadow?"
—*Kenneth Brandau*

"DC's new kid-friendly line would be a perfect home for ***Sugar and Spike***... (You guys didn't mention in this year, so I did. We can't let DC forget about *Sheldon Mayer's* classic.)"
—*Frank Cole*

"As bit a hit as ***Fringe*** is, I'm surprised that no one is doing a ***Fringe*** comic right now. Strike while the iron is hot!"
—*Steve Culpepper*

"With all the art books that everyone's producing nowadays, why doesn't someone put together a collection of *Earl Norem's* great cover work for ***Savage Sword of Conan*** and other Marvel magazines?"
—*Mark Britton*

And there you have the best and worst of 2009 according to our readers. Thanks to all of you who submitted your own nominations, and I wish we had room to offer something from everyone (you might be surprised to learn how many comics or creators were spotlighted in five or ten different Red K submissions, so some of the awards that made the cut actually represent the sentiments of other readers as well). And look for us in late December, when we'll do it all over again for 2010!

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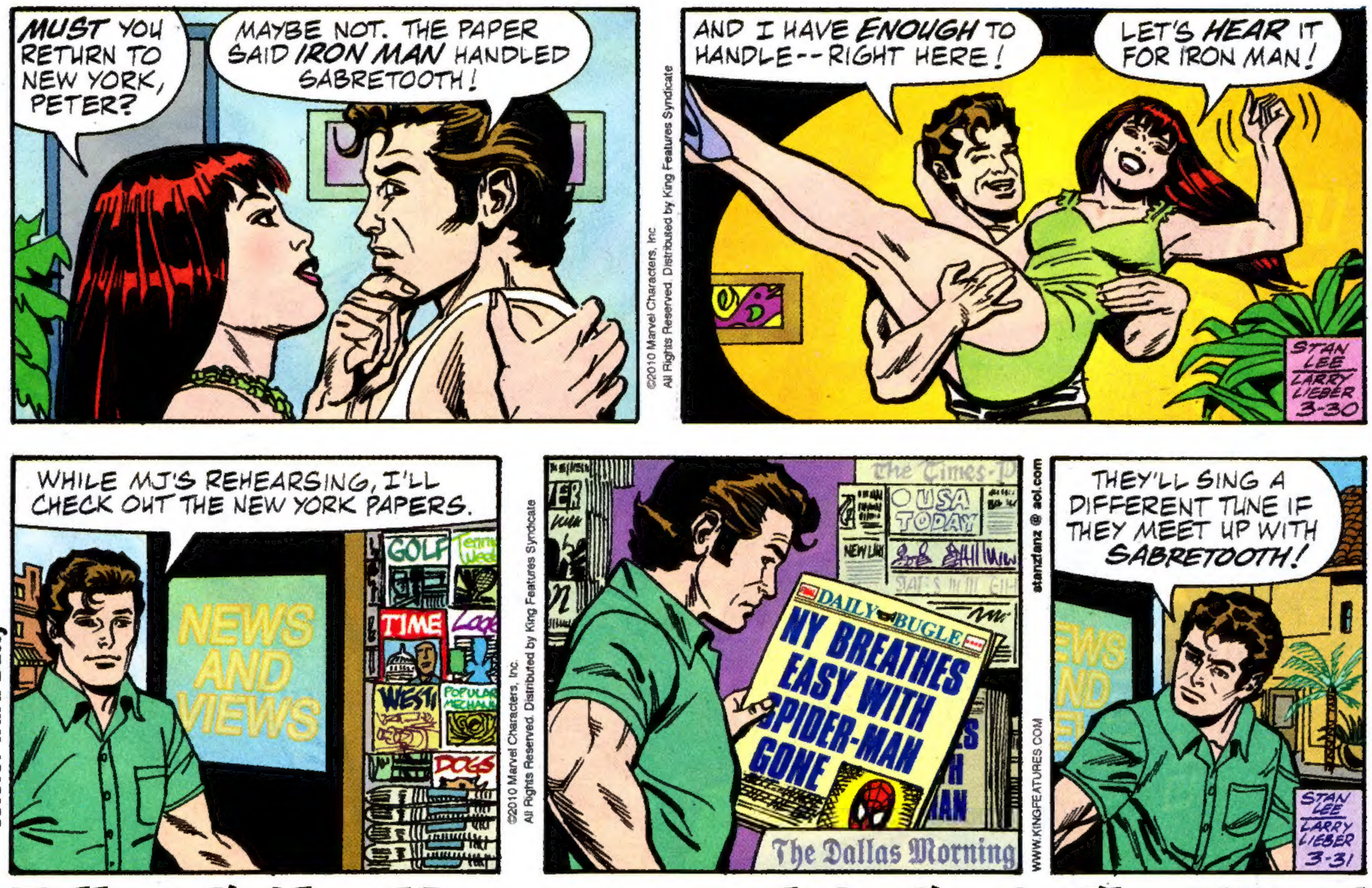
MUST YOU RETURN TO NEW YORK, PETER?
MAYBE NOT. THE PAPER SAID IRON MAN HANDLED SABRETOOTH!
AND I HAVE ENOUGH TO HANDLE--RIGHT HERE!
LET'S HEAR IT FOR IRON MAN!
STAN LEE LARRY LIEBER 3-30
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